

Childminder inspection report

Brown-Hicks, Jacqueline
Glenrothes

Service provided by: Brown-Hicks, Jacqueline

Service provider number: SP2003904570

Care service number: CS2003007619

Inspection Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland, including childminders, cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

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1 Introduction

Jacqueline Brown-Hicks operates a large childminding service and has two named childminding assistants. When working alone, the childminder may provide care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time, of whom a maximum of 4 are not yet attending primary school and only one is aged under 12 months. These numbers include children of the childminder's family.

When working with Molly Brown the service may provide care for a maximum of 12 children at any one time, of whom a maximum of 6 are not yet attending primary school and only one is aged under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

When working with Mr John Brown- Hicks and Molly Brown the service may provide care for a maximum of 12 children at any one time, of whom a maximum of 8 are not yet attending primary school and only two is aged under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

Overnight service may not be provided.

We saw the childminders provided an environment in which children could grow, develop and play safely. On the first day of the inspection, which was unannounced the childminder was working with her husband and daughter who were her assistants and on the second day, which was announced she was working with her husband.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following an unannounced inspection on 29 July 2015 between 8.35am and 9.50am and on 25 September between 10.30am and 12.30. There were 12 children in attendance on the first morning of our visit and three children on the second morning. Feedback was given to the childminder and her husband at the end of the second inspection visit.

During the inspection we gathered evidence from a variety of sources including relevant policies and records such as the child protection policy, accident forms and children's Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). We spoke with the childminder and the assistants and most of the children in attendance. We also observed how the childminder and her assistants interacted with the children and considered the general environment and equipment used in the provision of the childcare service.

We sent out ten questionnaires and had received five back prior to the writing of this report. Comments are included within the report.

The childminder aims to offer a child care setting in a home from home environment. She aims to provide a happy, welcoming and stimulating environment where the children will feel safe and secure.

Views of people using the service

Children's comments included:

"We're going on the train. I don't know where."

"We do drawing. When it came to Easter we made Easter eggs. I did a word search."

"I'm rubbish at air hockey."

"We like doing hamma beads. We did cheesy feet. We did them with pizza."

"We did Chinese New Year and we had to figure out stuff."

"Jackie set up a wee café for us"

"x asked for the playdough. I was making shapes, circles."

"We went to messy play. I put too much glitter on my painting. It was a hedgehog."

"I've got crisps, sandwiches, dairylee cheese, juice, biscuits and chocolate mousse."

"I'm doing lacing."

"I like playing in the cars."

"X always crashes into me."

"We've got a tennis table."

"I'd like ham and cucumber on my sandwich."

"I like playing inside."

Comments on the Care Inspectorate questionnaires included:

"My child has been attending for five years. He is always treated to be part of the family. He loves attending and never complains about having to go especially in the holidays when he might want to play with his friends."

"Jackie does an amazing job."

"This childminder was recommended to me by a childminder as she was full. I am so glad she was full as my child now has, in my opinion, the best childminders and childcare available. His days are filled with so much fun and laughter and learning. He has developed into a smart, chatty, happy little boy. His love for his childminders is more than obvious and he talks about them frequently and asks to see them during holidays!"

"I really can not fault any aspect of his care and I am 100% happy, at ease and confident that when my wee boy leaves me in the morning his welfare and care needs are being taken care of. They collect him and drop him off at my house. This is amazing."

"I would highly recommend Jackie and JJ's childminding service to any parent. They are friendly, caring, considerate, easy to talk to etc"

"I am a very happy parent knowing that my child is happy, healthy and adores both Jackie and JJ."

"I can't speak highly enough of the childminding service."

"My child loves going. They are such fun loving wonderful people that have every child's best interests at heart. They are constantly coming up with ideas, doing different activities and involving kids in these decisions too."

"My child has so much fun there and they are truly wonderful people."

"Jackie will contact us asking what we are currently focussing on at home so she can also help when the children are in her care."

"We get daily update on facebook page and also face to face."

"My children get three meals and also snacks when at the childminders. These all seem to be well balanced and healthy and the kids love them."

"I would feel comfortable speaking to them if I had any issues."

"Could not be happier with the service provided. My children receive the best care."

Self assessment

Every year all care services complete a 'self assessment' telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this is accurate.

We had not received a self assessment prior to the first inspection visit, as requested. We reminded the childminder about the importance of submitting a self assessment, at the time of writing this report this has still not been completed and submitted as requested.

What the service did well

The childminder and her assistants operated a busy service and had developed an open and friendly relationship with the children. Most children appeared confident in the care of the childminder.

The childminder had introduced a private facebook page for the parents and updated it daily with photographs, videos and text about what the children had been doing.

The childminder and her assistants had undertaken training on The Connected Baby with Dr Suzanne Zeedyk since the last inspection and she spoke confidently about how much more alert she had become to the needs of the youngest children since attending the course.

The childminder confirmed that she and her assistant took the children on a variety of outings to ensure they had a variety of experiences when attending the service.

What the service could do better

The childminder should update her medication policy in line with current guidance. She should undertake an audit of the medication on the premises throwing out what is out of date and returning what does not belong to children attending the service. Medication should be stored safely in line with current guidance.

Children's attendance should be recorded accurately to ensure that a clear record of who is on the premises at all times is available to her and her assistants.

She should consider the impact of the training on attachment which she had undertaken to ensure best practice at all times.

A risk assessment should be carried out to ensure a safe environment for children's play and for exiting the building in the event of fire.

The nappy changing unit should not be stored within the small playroom, even if it is not used, during the opening hours of the service as it restricts the size of play space available to the children. It should be used where running water is available.

The childminder should update her child protection policy to reflect the fact that she is employing assistants.

Each child should have a personal learning plan to enable the childminder to record details about the children's learning, to allow the children to take pride in their work and to facilitate the sharing of information between home and the service. These should demonstrate how the parents are involved in discussing their children's care and supporting their learning.

The childminder should ensure that children routinely wash their hands on returning indoors from playing outside in the garden to minimise the risk of spreading infection.

2 The grades we awarded

We grade the quality of care and support, the quality of the environment and the quality of management and leadership. If the childminder employs an assistant, we also grade the quality of staffing. In each case, we award a grade on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent.

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

3 Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We saw that the childminder and her assistants provided an adequate quality of care and support to the children in their care within a relaxed atmosphere where children could feel happy and confident.

We saw that the childminder provided written information to help parents find out about the service, whilst also gathering information which helped her to get to know the children. In this way the childminder tried to ensure that she could best meet each child's needs. Ongoing daily discussions ensured good communication with parents and children alike.

We saw evidence of children being given choices such as what they would like to have in their sandwiches for their picnic lunch on their trip on the first day of our inspection.

The childminder told us that parents liked to be kept informed verbally and by text messages. The new facebook page which had recently been introduced was proving particularly popular with daily additions showing what the children had been doing and what they had eaten. We saw photographs and video clips of the children at play which were available to parents. As a result the childminder told us that she no longer needed to complete individual daily diaries for the children.

We saw the childminder and her assistant praising the children appropriately throughout the inspection and this encouraged each child's self esteem and acknowledge their successes and achievements. Achievements were acknowledged on facebook and the childminder told us that the children enjoyed looking, with their parents, at their certificates awarded to them e.g. for successes at potty training. In addition we saw a Celebrating Success Board on the wall but it wasn't up to date and only featured three of the children when we saw that approximately thirty used this service at the time of the inspection. Consideration should be given to being more inclusive, in order to take account of the feelings and self esteem of all of the children.

The children told us that they enjoyed a variety of experiences including trips such as woodland walks, cinema, Lochore Meadows, beach, indoor adventure areas and outdoor nature toddler group. On the first day of the inspection they were all preparing to go on the train to Edinburgh to the Grassmarket Giant Children's Playground. The childminder told us that she "got good ideas for crafts using junk and came back full of inspiration." The childminder recorded her outings on facebook so that parents could see the fun their children were having with the childminder.

During term time the children followed a busy schedule going to toddler group, nursery and school and the childminder worked her routine around these activities. She also ensured that they had a selection of activities such as baking and painting providing for their developmental needs, respecting their interests and including them in what was available within the local community such as trips to the library to choose books or to the Outdoor Toddler Group at Vane Farm.

We heard that the children made choices as to whether to go on the trips with the childminder or to stay and play in the house with one of the assistants. This meant that they could follow their own interests and did not have to always follow the interests of others. We heard that the children had plenty of opportunities to learn how to keep safe through role play in the garden and when out and about on trips. The childminder made good use of car seats and high visibility jackets to ensure that the younger children kept children safe when out and about.

We could see that children had many opportunities to be active and to live a healthy lifestyle. The childminder offered a variety of healthy meals and snacks. Some were offered a healthy breakfast during the inspection, washing their hands carefully beforehand. The childminder was aware of the needs of each child and was able to follow their own routines as she knew which would already have eaten breakfast at home before arriving to play.

We saw that most children had Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). One child said to us:

"These are our folders and they're for if you've got any drawings and for celebrating successes." We looked at the Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and found that some children, who had been in the service for up to two years had no entries. One child had only one entry yet had attended the service for eighteen months. We saw that families shared one file instead of having individual files in order to recognise each child's achievements. Some entries in the PLPs were not dated. Many folders had the same entries: e.g. Chinese New Year; cheesy feet, rather than these being individualised to the age and stage and interests of each individual child.

We were unable to see evidence of how parents supported children's learning. There was no evidence that they had contributed to the PLPs. We could not see links between any planning having been done and the PLPs. See Requirement 1

We saw that the childminder had forms to use in case she needed to administer medication whilst they were in her care. We saw that some household medication was not stored safely where it would be inaccessible to the children. Medication for the minded children was kept of their reach but in a box which was not clean and it was mixed with medication which the childminder said was for use by her own family. Many of the medicines were out of date dating back to 2012. Some medication belonged to children who no longer attended the service. Some medication was not in its original package. Some medication did not state who it was for. We asked the childminder to make improvements in this area. See requirement 2

A child protection policy was in place but it did not mention the role of the childminding assistants. The childminder should update her childminding policy to reflect the fact that she now employs assistants in her service, as discussed during the inspection. See recommendation 1.

On the second day of the inspection when the service was less busy we observed a relaxed atmosphere between the childminder, the assistant and the children and they showed patience and sensitivity. The childminder and the assistants demonstrated a good knowledge of the children in their care and we could see that the minded children appeared secure and confident when playing in the setting.

On the first day of the inspection we observed the children being active and mainly happy in the care of the childminder and the assistants as the childminder made the picnic lunches offering the children choices of which sandwiches they wanted and which crisps and desserts they wanted.

One assistant went to collect more children, taking other children with him to ensure that appropriate ratios were maintained; however he did not ask the children who would like to accompany him, simply picking a young child up with no prior discussion. More care could have been taken to be respectful of the child's feelings and show sensitivity as he was engaged in play. However he did not ask who wanted to go in the car with him, respecting the children's choices but instead whisked a child up from behind her, stating that it was to keep the ratios in the house right and carried her to the car. This did not provide a nurturing atmosphere where the rights of the child were put at the centre of what they were doing.

The childminder and her husband discussed with the inspector what they would do if they had any child protection concerns and they had attended child protection training within the past six months.

The childminder had also attended training on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the SHANARRI indicators. This had raised her awareness about keeping children safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Grade

The quality of care and support is graded 3 - Adequate

Requirements

Number of requirements - 2

1. The childminder must, after consultation with each child and parents/carers, ensure all children have a personal plan and that the plans are regularly reviewed to ensure the service meets the needs of individual children.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011

SSI 2011/210 Regulation 5 Personal plans.

Timescale for implementation: Within 4 weeks of receipt of this report.

2. The provider must review and improve the procedures for the storage, recording and administering of medication and ensure that this is managed safely at all times, in line with current guidance, available on our website.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011

SSI 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Welfare of users.

Timescale for implementation: within 24 hours of this report.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. It is recommended that the childminder further develops the child protection policy to include details about her responsibility and that of her employees to inform the local social work office if either of them have any child protection concerns about any of the children in their care or if the allegation was made about herself or any member of her household in order to safeguard children's health and wellbeing.

This is in order to comply with:

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2 health and wellbeing and Standard 14 - A well managed service

4 Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The childminder's home was set out with separate areas for childminding. The children used the small ground floor playroom and dining kitchen as a base for their activities. The sitting room was generally set up with travel cots. The sitting room was not in use during our first visit. However the childminder explained that it was normally set up with travel cots. The childminder told us that another room was used regularly, particularly by the older children, however it was not in use during the inspection. The kitchen offered space for dining and messy play. There was a secure, enclosed garden which had a clear Perspex shelter to allow outdoor play in all weathers. It was a busy service and we saw children and parents welcomed into the kitchen by the childminder.

On the first day of the inspection the children did not have a sufficient amount of room in which to play indoors, taking into account the numbers in attendance and children's ages and stages of development. The large sitting room was not set up for their use since they were all going out for the day and it was not being used. This meant that all twelve children used the playroom which was not large enough for the numbers of children in attendance during the first morning of our inspection visit. However the children also used the garden and kitchen. The childminder was busy making packed lunches of the children's choices in the kitchen where one or two children also had breakfast. There were large cushions on the playroom floor and a free standing changing unit in the corner further restricting the space available for the children. Some children then went to play outside. No activities were set up yet eight children were in the setting when we arrived, unannounced, over an hour before the children left for their day trip.

A variety of toys were stored so that children could access them independently and safely.

We saw that the childminder had kept a record of any accidents involving the children and parents had been asked to sign to confirm that they had been informed appropriately.

Children enjoyed playing outside in the secure garden on the first day of the inspection and we saw that they had opportunities for playing on the trampoline safely. We saw that it had side netting and the childminder ensured that the zip was used so that the children could not fall out. Children were aware of the rules to keep them safe whilst they played and we heard them reminding one another of how to keep safe when playing on the trampoline. We saw that much work was being done to improve the outdoor play space for the children and it had been flattened down to one level. This was work in progress and on the first day of the inspection we could see that only half of the garden was available to the children. Much of that was used for storage of two adult bikes, a chicken run and various other items of equipment, further reducing the play space available to the children and making it difficult to carry out a risk assessment of the area.. This was much improved by the second day of the inspection.

There was a large area of woodland along side the garden with the family's chickens but one of the assistants said that the children had not used that area for some considerable time. As a result children were not benefitting from as large an outdoor play area as before. There was a large area of woodland along side the garden with the family's chickens but one of the assistants said that the children had not used that area for some considerable time. The childminder informed us that having received infection control advice from the Environmental Health Officer in April 2015, she had chosen to withdraw the children's access to the woods. As a result children were not benefitting from as large an outdoor play area as before. We saw some children move freely between indoors and outdoors on the first day of the inspection. We saw some children move freely between indoors and outdoors on the first day of the inspection with the younger children enjoying the large cosy coupe car which was out for them to play with. The older ones enjoyed the air hockey game which was delivered by the Fife Childcare Early Years Services Resource Base during the inspection.

No children were encouraged to wash their hands when they moved back indoors from the garden or before they left the setting for their trip having played outside. See requirement 1

We saw that the registers had not been completed for any day of the week of our unannounced inspection. Nor were the children marked out of the service when taken out to collect other children. This meant that no accurate record of attendance was being maintained. This is particularly important in a large service where more than one adult is present, since the childminder must have a procedure in place where the children can all be quickly identified and accounted for in an emergency, to ensure their safety. See requirement 2

We saw that the families all used the back door when entering and exiting the service. On the first day of the inspection we saw that the front door was completely blocked with items such as car seats. This meant that no one could leave the premises by this exit in the event of an emergency. Risk assessments should be developed to include all areas of the house and garden and also for outings to show how potential hazards have been identified and addressed thereby ensuring a safe environment for the children. See recommendation 1

Grade

The quality of environment is graded 3 - Adequate

Requirements

Number of requirements - 2

1. The childminder must ensure that the infection prevention and control procedures are correctly implemented to include appropriate handwashing procedures for all children after playing outside.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011

SSI 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a)&(d) Welfare of users.

Timescale for implementation: upon receipt of this report.

2. The childminder must ensure that an accurate register of attendance is maintained at all times showing arrivals and departures as these take place.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011

SSI 2011/210 Regulation 4 Welfare of users.

Timescale for implementation: Within 24 hours of receipt of this report

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 1

1. Written risk assessments should be further developed and implemented covering indoors, the garden and outings to ensure a safe environment for children.

This is in order to comply with:

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2 A safe environment

5 Quality of staffing

We only assess this where the childminder employs an assistant.

Findings from the inspection

The childminder demonstrated that she met an adequate standard in relation to staffing. We concluded this through discussion with her, through discussion with her assistants, through observations of the interaction between the childminder, her assistants and the children during the inspection and through observation of relevant documentation.

The childminder explained that her assistants were fully involved in the day to day care of the children and that they were fully conversant with the policies and paperwork fully engaging in all aspects of the service. The assistants confirmed this and we could see that they all knew the children well and that they had a good relationship with each individual. The childminder explained that she worked alongside her husband and her daughter and that in this way she could vouch for their abilities and ongoing good practice. However, she did not carry out any formal monitoring scheme or any type of appraisal to quality assure the consistency of their work.

The childminder explained that she and each of her assistants had attended training on the Connected Baby by Dr Suzanne Zeedyk and she told us that she had learned the significance of a child being picked up last from the setting and the importance of being aware of how that must feel to that child.

The childminder told us of her commitment to on going professional development for herself and her assistants and to supporting children in ways which ensure positive outcomes. One of the assistants is currently undertaking a childcare qualification at college whilst continuing to work part time in the service. She hopes to bring a renewed knowledge to the service in order to further improve outcomes for the children.

Grade

The quality of staffing is graded 3 - Adequate

Requirements

Number of requirements - 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 0

6 Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Throughout the inspection the childminder demonstrated an adequate level of understanding of the issues around the children's development, safety and wellbeing. She had a clear understanding of her role and responsibilities as a childminder.

The childminder confirmed that she and one assistant had completed First Aid training and elementary food hygiene training. As a result parents could be reassured that they should know what to do to deal with minor incidents and accidents and should minimise the risk of cross infection when preparing and serving food. Both were booked on training on Building the Ambition in October 2015 - National practice guidance to support staff in providing high quality early learning and childcare.

The childminder told us that she was undertaking an on line training course on Caring for Vulnerable Children in order to help meet the needs of the children in her care.

We could not see where the childminder had taken opportunities for formally involving parents in reviewing the service and using the feedback to improve the service. For example, no questionnaires had been issued to parents since the last inspection and there was no evidence of routine reviews in her PLPs.

The childminder had some relevant guidance documents and was beginning to familiarise herself with some of them. We advised that she should keep up to date with best practice and legislation in child care through a wide variety of ways which could include the use of the Care Inspectorate website and Hub. We discussed this with the childminder during the inspection.

The childminder had not completed the Care Inspectorate self assessment. If she had completed this with her assistants this would have demonstrated a quality assurance process which would have helped her to show how she monitors and assesses the quality of the service she is providing with a view to improving the outcomes for the children.

It is the responsibility of the childminder to be familiar with all necessary legislation. We directed her to the relevant documents which are available on our website. The childminder was unaware of the legislation connected with her childminding service, with the need to maintain personal plans and to review them with parents at least every six months and of the need to notify the Care Inspectorate when there is an outbreak of infection such as Salmonella within the service. See requirement 1

Grade

The quality of management and leadership is graded 3 - Adequate

Requirements

Number of requirements - 1

1. The provider must ensure effective procedures are in place to ensure children's care plans are implemented consistently across the service. In order to do this they must: a) Implement support plans for children which should be reviewed and updated at 6 monthly intervals or more often as required. b) Undertake a review of staff training needs in relation to the completion of care plans. c) Monitor the completion of the plans at regular intervals to ensure continued consistency. This is in order to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, No 210: Principles 3: shall provide a care service in a manner that promotes quality, safety, independence and promotes choice, 4(1)(a) - Requirements to make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users. 5 (1) &, 2(a)(b)(i),(ii),(iii),(c) & (d) Requirements to prepare personal plans. Regulation 15(a)&(b) - to make proper provision of sufficient and suitably qualified and competent staff. National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 6 Support and Development and Standard 12 - Confidence in Staff. Timescale for implementation: within 4 weeks of receipt of this report

Recommendations

Number of recommendations - 0

7 What the service has done to meet any recommendations or requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

8 Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

9 Enforcements

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection

10 Other issues

n.a.

11 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
21 Mar 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	5 - Very Good
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed
12 Oct 2011	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	5 - Very Good
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed
16 Nov 2010	Announced (Short Notice)	Care and support	Not Assessed
		Environment	Not Assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed
13 Mar 2009	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	5 - Very Good
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed

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Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is c?nain eile ma nithear iartras.

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